

### Policy Applies to:

All staff employed by Mercy.

### Related Standards:

- Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015
- Ngā Paerewa Health and Disability Services Standard NZS 8134:2021
- EQUIP 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 Infection Control
- EQUIP Standard 3.2 Health and Safety

### Rationale:

Mercy is required to protect staff who are at risk of being exposed to infections in the healthcare setting.

### Objectives:

- To ensure staff have access to education on occupational vaccinations offered at Mercy Hospital
- To ensure staff are offered access to occupational immunisations
- To minimise the risk of infection to both patients and staff
- To maintain accurate health records and reports of staff immunisation status.

### Cultural Considerations:

Privacy standards apply to all staff member health conversations and records. The relationship between the healthcare provider i.e. the Occupational vaccinator and the patient i.e. the staff member is the equivalent of that between Mercy Hospital staff members and patients.

The understanding of occupational health information in relation to vaccination is respectful of the consumer's cultural needs and it is defined by the patient i.e., the staff member. This involves offering support (release from work, and reimbursement of related costs) for offsite occupational vaccinations if this is the wish of the staff member.

Vaccination is offered in a range of clinic times and spaces to best suit the needs of the staff members. If staff members are found to never have been vaccinated, support is offered and a referral is made from Mercy staff health providers to a primary healthcare provider of the staff members' choice.

### Implementation:

#### Immunisation requirements

The Infection Prevention and Control Nurse will coordinate staff immunisation assessment and vaccination according to:

- The risk to the staff member from the work environment and tasks
- The risk to patients with whom the staff member may come in contact.

The degree of risk to staff depends on their level of contact with patients who may have infectious diseases. Conversely, staff may place patients at risk if they are suffering from a vaccine-preventable disease.

#### Risk Categories

For the purpose of assessing risk factors the Infection Prevention and Control Nurse will assess staff into one of three groups

- High
- Medium
- Low

#### High-Risk Group

- Staff who come into close physical contact with patients e.g. clinical and support services staff and including those that handle blood and body fluids/ tissues of others as a part of their work.

#### Medium-Risk Group

- Staff not primarily involved with patients, but by the nature of their work will come into contact with patients and blood and body fluid products e.g. CSSD technicians, theatre suite assistants orderlies, housekeeping, laundry, food service assistants and clerical staff who are based in a patient area and also assist with tasks such as linen removal and bed cleaning.

#### Low-Risk Group

- Staff who have no direct physical contact with patients e.g.; kitchen staff who do not provide meal delivery to patient rooms, administration, finance, clerical

#### Vaccination

- All staff working in high and medium-risk areas must document their immune status as part of their application for employment.
- The Infection Prevention and Control Nurse will review the immune status of staff working in high and medium-risk areas according to the table below.
- Staff will be offered vaccination with consent or non-consent documented on the Mercy Employee Health Monitoring Consent Form (Appendix One). This information will be held in the employee's staff health file.

- Staff that are unable to seroconvert or decline vaccination of Hepatitis B are given information by email and letter detailing the steps required in the event of an exposure to either a hepatitis B positive or unknown case. Offer of vaccination for those that decline does not expire and reminders are sent by email once a year. Vaccination against Hepatitis B is highly encouraged for healthcare workers, especially those in high-risk areas.

Mercy offers an annual influenza vaccination programme to all staff and endorses the Ministry of Health recommendations that all healthcare workers be vaccinated. Vaccines are recommended for the following diseases and risk groups for staff within the healthcare environment.

	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Tuberculosis	✓		
Hepatitis B	✓	✓	
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	✓		
Rubella (German measles)	✓		
Morbilli (English measles)	✓		
Mumps	✓		
Poliomyelitis	✓		
Tetanus	Gardeners, Maintenance		
Influenza* <i>annual vaccination</i>	✓	✓	✓
Pandemic related vaccination	All staff are to be vaccinated as required by law and supported/encouraged to have vaccinations in the absence of a mandated requirement		

**Evaluation:**

- Staff health records
- Application for employment records
- ACHS report (Hepatitis B immune status)
- Staff Influenza annual uptake report
- Infection Prevention and Control Nurse reporting to Infection Prevention and Control Committee.

## Associated Documents

**Appendix One: Employee Health Monitoring Consent Form**

### External

- Immunisation Handbook, Online Version 2023, Ministry of Health
- Guidelines for Tuberculosis Control in New Zealand, 2010
- Privacy Act, 1993
- Health Information Privacy Code, 1994

### Internal

- Standard Precautions Policy
- Hazard Management Policy
- Mercy Hospital Application for Employment - Appendix 3.1, Human Resources Manual
- Privacy Policy